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hit with homicide
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Citizen staff
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DIKING, SANDBAGGING CONTINUE

Deep freeze pushing ice upstream

by MARK NIELSEN
Citizen staff

The Nechako River ice jam stood at 13 kilometres long Friday, according to city liaison officer Kevin Brown, which means it grew by about 1.5 km. over the previous 24 hours.

It is now about a kilometre downstream of the Morning Place subdivision.

Crews were busy Friday doubling the height of gabion diking at Morning Place, where there are seven homes along the riverbank. They're also placing 4,000 sandbags on top of sections of the diking at the location, Brown said.

Since Sunday, when overnight lows dropped to the -20 C range, the jam has advanced eight kilometres.

"The continuing cold snap is resulting in substantial amounts of frazil or soft ice to form on the open water areas of the river upstream from Prince George," Brown said. "This ice then floats downriver and gets jammed up against the ice that has accumulated over previous days."

Able to watch the frazil float by from his back deck, Morning Place resident Keith Bowen said he's feeling secure, saying the river would have to rise a good 10 feet before it will affect his property, thanks to the diking. He believes the city is doing all it can do to mitigate the current situation.

But Bowen, who is involved in a residents' group formed in the wake of this season's ice jam, added something needs to be done to prevent more trouble in the years to come.

"I honestly believe the provincial government, federal government, everybody has to step up to the plate now," he said. "They used to dredge



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

The ice jam on the Nechako River with the cutbanks on the right and the Cameron Street Bridge in the far background. Take a helicopter tour of the ice jam by logging on to the citizen's website: www.princegeorgecitizen.com

the river before, I think that would be a start, get a channel going beneath the ice so when the ice does build up there's somewhere for the water to go."

An Amphibex floating excavator should also be purchased he said, so it's ready whenever a jam starts to plug the Nechako. Getting Kemano II back on track would also help, he said, because it would divert 85 per cent of the water back through Alcan's generators.

"They could control this river and we will never have this problem again," he said.

Bowen has lived at Morning Place for just two years, but understands the situation was much worse when the last significant ice jam struck in November 1996, bringing ice up to the back deck although the house escaped flooding because it has no basement.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the jam, the Amphibex floating excavator's crew made progress Friday on extend-

ing a channel into the Nechako River and could be seen from the Canfor pump house on the north side.

As well, most of the three-kilometre pipeline that will bring warm water from the steam plant at the Canfor Intercon pulp mill to the Nechako River had been completed the project appeared to be ahead of the Monday completion date.

The 15 C water will be released into the channel to melt the ice and open channels in the Lower Nechako.

As of Friday morning, \$3.5 million had been spent on mitigation efforts all of it to be covered by the provincial emergency program.

As of Wednesday, the flow from the Skins Lake spillway was 81.7 cubic metres per second, down from the peak of 85 cms, but still well above the average for this time of year of 35 to 40 cms, according to the Alcan hotline.

At Kemano, the fifth generator was put back in service on Jan. 7 and as a result water consumption at Kemano has gone up by 10 cms to 130 cms.

- Area by area:
- Area A - River Road: Three pumps working in the area.
- Area B - Ongman Road/McAlone Crescent: No new activity.
- Area C - Pulp Mill Road: No activity.
- Area D - Delhaven/Poser Road: Sandbags will be added to some sections of Gabion portable diking to increase the height.
- Area E - Morning Place/North Nechako Road: 4,000 sandbags being placed on some sections of Gabion portable diking to increase the height.



Photo courtesy The Exploration Place

River ice has packed right up to the deck boards on the old Nechako River bridge in this historic photo.

Ice jam is nothing new

by MARK NIELSEN
Citizen staff

Now in its 47th day, the ongoing ice jam may well go down in history both for its duration and the amount of havoc it's wreaked, but as any long-time resident will tell you, it's not the first time one has struck Prince George.

Armand Danicola, 85, remembers the winter of 1936-37 when an ice-induced jam sent water as far as the CN Rail station on First Avenue.

The flooding began in December, but the trouble occurred in January, he said, when the temperature dropped below -30 C. It created some challenges for his father, Tony, and the

others who worked for the railway.

"The passenger train that came in two, three times a week, they would have to move it every 10 or 15 minutes otherwise it would freeze because the water went right up to the axles of the cars," he said.

The most vivid impression for Danicola was the height of the jam at Island Cache, now known as Cottonwood Island Park.

"It was higher than a tall man," he said. "The ice was suspended amongst the cottonwood there was water running underneath and kids were tunneling through there."

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